

No 18.

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In: reported.

Dr. R. Murphy

Proximate cause of Pain

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Among the various subjects interesting both
Medical Philosophy none are more so than
the proximate cause of pain; yet, unfortunately,
for the science of Medicine, it has been but
little attended to - the cause of which I need not
attempt to ascertain. I will only observe, it may
in part, result from our known ignorance of the
Nature of the nervous power - It is, however,
by no means infallible on this principle, in
as much as it affords no indication of similar
difficulties to the investigation of the mode
in which agents act in exciting the power
constituting pain -

For the proximate Cause of pain, I
would advise, pressure upon some portion of the
nervous system.

To be satisfied, this hypothesis is correct,
will only require some attention to the state
of a part in which pain exists and the
Modus operandi of Measures or means by
which it is removed.

In most cases, pressure will be obvious.
If, for instance, I compre my left, with

my teeth, I find from the immediate consequences of the
use of, I do not puff hard enough to produce circula-
tion and thereby call in the aid of the circulatory
fluids, I find when I remove the pressure they
clear up. In more than nine tenths of the cases
which I have observed the immediate
agents of pressure ^{are the Circulating fluids} - Now were we surprised, that
should be the case when we reflect upon the
immense number of agents capable of causing
some inequality in their distribution. They produce
pressure often from congestion & frequently
reduce the same by collapse - instances of
the former we have in Spleen-ty, pneumonia
and all local inflammations &c - of the latter,
hemorrhages, Typhus &c -

The remedies for the first stage all act
by diminishing pressure - Venesection, by
abstracting a part of the circumference of the
heart and large arteries, diminishes
the *Vis a tergo*, and by lessening the volume
of Fluids in the large vessels affects the small
ones, which are always more than proportionately

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intended to empty themselves. Gastroc. has neutral salts, Ammonium, bromate, rest & C. produce ultimately the same effect which we have ascribed to Venetianation. Blister act by enabling the small vessels to contract with more energy, thereby to regain their natural dimensions, and by actually drawing off a part of the superabundant fluid. When applied to a violent part, they act by exciting a sympathetic or counter action, and here I should suppose them very little superior to rubefacient.

That blisters act in the mode I have described to them is probable, from their peculiar good effect in Erysipela, and other superficial local inflammations. When relaxing, measuring, as punctures, etc. however.

Prepare from collapse as in Syphilis where from its being general and not very great we find much anxiety restlessness, &c. requires not only stimuli but nutriment. Here we should certainly use different agents.

(4)

as different symptoms may indicate, if
Typhus delirium supervene, it should
be removed by opium which determines
more to the head than most other Stimulants -
I will take the liberty [&] mentioning, that,
it ^{is} probable Typhus delirium may occur
when there is in the system a sufficiency
of blood to prevent it, were it equally distributed
or it may be of a more alarming nature
when there is not a quantum sufficient
the it be equally distributed. Hence some
judgment may be necessary in the choice
of medicines or remedies.

It is from the agency of the
circulating fluids, (the weakest parts are the
first to suffer) and the viscera so often
seats of disease; in the acute state of
which we find copious depletion so
often indispensably necessary.

To further support of the idea I
will mention that we always

Find pain in proportion to the degree of pressure (allowing it to be sufficient to cause pain, and not to exceed the grade which would destroy sensibility.)

In phlegmonous inflammation we observe pain to be more acute as pressure increases and just before suppuration takes place, when the vessels are distended almost to their ~~no~~ plus ultra causing great pressure; more especially, on the nerves of their coats, which have the capacity their fibers appropriate in consequence of distension, we find the pain very great, which quickly subsides when from the resection of ~~the~~ skin now deposited under the skin in the cavities of the cellular structure, the vessels regain ^{their} proper dimensions. But should matter be formed under tunica vaginalis which can not yield we find the pain increased from the pressure still continuing. Here a surgical operation should remove the pressure — We also find pain in ligamentous & tendinous parts more severe

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than that of muscular portion of the forceps
~~together~~, when it does occur ~~there being~~

there being insensibility in a considerable
part favours the idea, because they
are insensibile only from the difficulty
of applying pressure, the nerves supplying
them being so small as to be difficult
to compress; and very little to favour it,
for they possess very little contractility and
their vessels being so small as to be incapable
of any speedy congestion, yet they congest
itself always take place before they become
inflamed or painful, which causes great
alarm from this before being unyielding;
for the same reason pain & inflammation
in these parts are hard and tedious
to remove - In cases of ruptured
tendons we are told that a burning
sensation is all that is perceived
first - This arises from slight compression
of their very minute nerves

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Since too we find they burning sensation

Very common in Dyspepsia, and other
inflammations situated near the surface
of the body when the nerves are very much
disturbed - The sensation peculiar to heat depends on
caloric readily producing this kind of
irritation - Hence both the sensation of cold
is for a moment very much like that of
heat - But carry this to a more
intense degree, from the agency of the
circulating fluids &c. They will both be
confounded with pain from other causes.

Pain in the teeth is, more severe taking
into consideration the quantum of nerve
acted upon, as that can done than
that from almost any other source,
because the nerve here being surrounded
by a hard bony wall which can not
yield must suffer immense compression.
The passing of gall stone, urinary Calculi.

(8)

give extreme purpose

I will not here multiply cases, which
might be done ad infinitum; nor a
they necessary, for should any be disposed
to adopt the idea, they can not be at any
to see how many are the agents and how diverse
their modus operandi in causing & removing
purpose - I will only add, I can not perceive
any case of pain, either direct or sympathetic
mechanical or otherwise, which may not
be as plausibly accounted for on this,
on any other principle, but should it be
exposed to better light exhibit points
vulnerable to be defended, I will prove
and with pleasure surrender it at once.

I am fully aware that I have oversimplified
nothing like system - that I have taken to
much perhaps for granted - that I have
omitted many things almost miserably

met with the subject and supplied him
place with others very little to the
purpose — that the orthography syntax
and especially the almost illegible scrawl
renders all the literary liberality can
possibly bear ~~time goes now~~, however,
there, I hope, it will receive when it is
recalled, that it is certainly the legitimate
Infans necepitatis.

December 1st 1813

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